

## Episode 40

Since work on *Takmilah Fathul Mulhim* required frequent and extensive reading of reference books, and it was difficult to anticipate which reference books would be needed each day, after teaching the lessons assigned to me from morning until afternoon and after completing the Fatwa work assigned to me, I began visiting the library for two hours after Zuhr every day for this work. In those days, the library was located in a dimly lit room of that dilapidated building which we used to call *Purana Bangla* (Old Bungalow). Here, books sat crammed in cluttered wooden book-cases, and besides a small sitting area on the floor for the manager of the library Hazrat Maulana Abdul Khafi (may Allah's mercy be upon him), there was no proper place for anyone else to sit. I made space for myself by squeezing between book-cases containing books on the science of Hadith so that I could sit on the bare floor with a small study table before me. The study table would hold the books and my writing register, while I would study and write sitting on the floor.

Though Alhamdulillah I had bolsters, pillows, etc. available at home which could have been brought here, it can only be put to my stupidity that the thought did not occur to me at all that I should bring them here and make my sitting more comfortable. However, may Allah Most High shower His mercies upon Hazrat Maulana Abdul Khafi Sahab, who was the manager of the library at that time. When he saw me working on the bare floor, he laid an oldish mat for me to sit on, which reduced the hardness of the floor. A small timeworn study table would lay before me, its jagged surface riddled with cracks and crevices. I would lay a pile of books on it, but even then, other books would be frequently required, which I would often bring from the book-cases by myself, and when needed would take assistance from Maulana Abdul Khafi (may Allah's mercy be upon him), who would gladly provide the books I required.

Those were days when the need for travel would seldom arise and I was also not acquainted with many people. Therefore, these two hours after Zuhr would be peacefully spent doing this beloved work. Even if someone came to visit during this time, I would meet them at that simple sitting place itself. At the same time, I had decided to undertake this work for my own benefit, in order

to increase my own knowledge. I was therefore in no rush to finish it, and would not proceed ahead until I was satisfied with the relevant discussions of the Hadith under discussion. As a result, the pace of work was not very fast. In those days, I had no link whatsoever to any institute besides Darul Uloom. And in Darul Uloom, I had no other work besides teaching, some service to Fatwa, editorship of monthly Al-Balagh Magazine and writing *Takmilah Fathul Mulhim*. In parallel to this work, writing the editorial of Al-Balagh and any other article based on the needs of the times would also continue. Political storms ebbed and flowed in the country but I remained engrossed in my work. Little did I know that this time of peace and tranquility would not last long, and that ceaseless storms of hectic activities lay quite near.

## First Trip to South Africa

The writing of *Takmilah Fathul Mulhim* had only reached *Kitab ul-Itaaq* when, at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Hijri, elder brother Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Rafi Usmani (may his shade be extended) and I received an invitation to visit South Africa. Among the individuals who had invited our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him) to South Africa, respected Abdul Hayy Warachia, who was a very devoted disciple of our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him), had passed away by that time. However, his companion the late Mr Ahmad Laher continued fulfilling the rights of his relationship with our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him) to the fullest. He invited both of us brothers for a *tablighi* tour of South Africa. We therefore embarked on that trip in Dhul Hijjah 1400 AH (circa November 1979) and spent about a month in South Africa, and were also blessed to perform Umrah during this journey. I wrote an account of this trip in "Al-Balagh" which is also included in "*Jahan-e-Deedah*".

After returning from this trip, I resumed writing *Takmilah Fathul Mulhim* from *Kitab ul-Buyoo'*. Afterwards, this work was interrupted, at times for months on end, due to other activities and travels (some details of which will be mentioned later). The above-mentioned library of Darul Uloom was rather cramped and dark. Also, neither could more books fit into it nor did it contain a suitable place for students and teachers to study. The plan of the library that the late Colonel had prepared was at that time estimated to require perhaps 1.8 million rupees. However, hardly

a few thousand rupees were available for this project. Our respected father designated a place for the construction of the library and began its construction relying on Allah Most High, and instructed: “construction of the library should be continued according to whatever amount Allah Most High arranges for it”. In line with these instructions, foundations of the building had been gradually laid during our respected father’s lifetime, when the tragic incident of his demise took place. At that time as well, a few thousand rupees were available for this project. It was Allah’s grace and favour that this construction work continued bit by bit. Allah Most High has bestowed a special taste and acumen for construction works to my elder brother Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Rafi Usmani (may his shade be extended), which is fully manifest in all construction works in Darul Uloom. I did not possess much aptitude for construction works, but to receive some share of rewards in these works, I would make a round of the under-construction buildings after Fajr prayer, and in the meantime would also complete my brief daily routine of *tasbeehaat*. Alhamdulillah its construction was eventually completed. I now desired that books should be arranged in it following such a classification system as would make locating any book easy. Modern libraries usually implemented a system of arranging and classifying books known as the Dewey system. When I studied it, I found it quite inadequate for classifying and numbering books related to Islamic sciences. Therefore, after quite some time and effort, I modified it according to the needs of the Islamic sciences, and also consulted experts of library science for this, until such a classification system was prepared which, in my opinion, was suitable for libraries of Islamic sciences. Maulana Abdul Khafi (may Allah’s mercy be upon him) had passed away by that time. After his demise, we arranged for training in library science for a graduate of Darul Uloom, Maulana Abu Tahir Arkani (may Allah protect him), and designated him as the manager of the library. Alhamdulillah he worked hard to arrange the books according to the new classification system.

With the construction of the new library, working on *Takmilah Fathul Mulhim* also became easier for me. I now received a designated space in this new library, with a suitable place for sitting as well as placing the books. I also changed my time for sitting here for this work to two hours in the morning, instead of after Zuhr.

An incident related to this is especially worthy of mention. The heart would desire to spend the two hours allotted for this work with complete focus, without any disturbance from anyone. However, it would often occur that I would study the books and come to an opinion about a certain issue, gather my thoughts, and take up the pen to write, when someone would come to greet me and begin talking about something they wanted to say. I would be quite irked by such interruptions as the entire chain of thoughts would be disrupted. When such situations increased in frequency and began hindering this work, I mentioned my quandary to my Shaikh Hazrat Arifi (may his secret be sanctified). Hazrat replied: “Are you doing this work of writing the commentary of Sahih Muslim for your own pleasure or to please Allah Most High? If your goal is Allah’s pleasure, then at any given time, it is achieved by fulfilling the need of that time. When you were studying and writing, Allah’s pleasure lied in your studying and writing at that time, and when a visitor arrived, the need of that time was to receive the guest. Now InshaAllah Allah’s pleasure will be achieved by paying attention to the guest and listening to them. So what do you have to lose? You were engaged in a deed to please Allah Most High before the visitor arrived, and you were also engaged in a deed to please Him afterwards. However, if the visitor stays for a longer duration than necessary, it is fine to excuse yourself in an appropriate manner.” These words of Hazrat (may Allah’s mercy be upon him) penetrated the heart so deep that it opened up a new chapter of knowledge and gnosis, and Alhamdulillah after this the predicament was alleviated to a great extent.

It was during the writing of *Takmilah Fathul Mulhim* itself that I received the opportunity to work first in the Council of Islamic Ideology, and later in the Federal Shariah Court and Supreme Court (details of which shall come later). For this, I had to frequently travel to Islamabad and many times for long durations. While I would carry the work on *Takmilah* with me during those trips, I would seldom get the opportunity to work on it due to my official duties. Besides these, this was the time when my struggle for interest-free banking was at its peak, for which frequent domestic as well as international journeys had to be undertaken one after the other. Furthermore, I had become the Vice Chairman of Islamic Fiqh Council in Jeddah and had to write essays for it as well.

Anyway! The travels would continue and essays would also be written based on the needs of the times, as a result of which lengthy gaps occurred in this work of the *Takmilah*. Nonetheless, it was the grace and favour of Allah Most High that He granted *tawfeeq* to this unworthy speck of dust to eventually complete it.

As mentioned before, I had originally started this work as a student of knowledge and for my own benefit, so that I could understand the correct meaning of Ahadith and gain familiarity with the discussions regarding them. I therefore never tried to speed up this work. For each Hadith under study, I would try to read all of its *turuq* that could be found in any book and would make sure to mention in the commentary any *tareeq* which would aid in understanding the meaning or backdrop of the Hadith. With regards to this, I received the most help from Hafiz Ibn Hajar and Allamah Aini's (may Allah's mercy be upon them both) commentaries of Sahih Bukhari. I would try to add something to the *turuq* they have mentioned in their commentaries, and would thus open the Hadith in several books which contain the *matn* of Ahadith. But the reality is that there are very few places where any addition can be made to the *turuq* and *shawahid* mentioned by those elders. At the time when I was doing this work, neither computer composing nor software like *Maktabah Shamilah* or *Jawami' al-Kalim* were in vogue. However, books such as "*al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras*", "*Tuhfatul Ashraaf*", "*Jaami' al-Usool*" and "*Majma' az-Zawaid*" and other books of *Zawaid* were available to aid in finding the Ahadith. But I wonder at those elders as to how, in those times, they combed through all books of Hadith directly, when neither published manuscripts nor modern indexes were available.

To the best of my ability, I have tried to mention the evidences of the Hanafi Fiqh after thorough investigation and with complete conviction. However, with the grace of Allah I never forgot the fact that these are *ijtihadi* differences of opinion, not a war between truth and falsehood in which every tactic must be employed to make one party win, and in which far-fetched interpretations of Ahadith must be asserted and insisted upon. I had heard the following saying of my respected father (may his secret be sanctified) from Hazrat Maulana Mufti Sayahuddin: "If you want to be a Hanafi yourself, be. But do not try to make the Hadith Hanafi." Therefore, wherever I could not

comprehend the supporting evidences of the Hanafi school of thought, I openly acknowledged my inability to understand.

It was also decreed by Allah that the part of Sahih Muslim whose commentary I had to write mostly consisted of topics related to family life, economics, social life, manners, and politics, and existing commentaries would often become brief by the time they reached these topics. At the same time, these were the topics in which the modern world had raised up newfangled issues. Instead of avoiding them, I tried to include a research and clarification of these issues in the book to the best of my ability. Due to this, several such issues have been discussed in the book which are not discussed in previous commentaries of Hadith.

While writing this work, without exaggeration hundreds of books had been referred to and almost all commentaries of Hadith had also been perused. Nonetheless, on the day I wrote the last lines of the *Takmilah*, the thought engulfed the mind that had my respected father been alive, I would have presented this manuscript in his service and received his prayers. Nevertheless, my teachers and elder brother were available. I came down the library and first brought it to my beloved teacher Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood (may Allah's mercy be upon him). He showered me with prayers. Thereafter I conveyed the good news to my elder brother Hazrat Maulana Mufti Rafi Usmani (may his shade be extended) and received his prayers. At that time, my eldest brother respected Muhammad Razi Usmani (may Allah's mercy be upon him) was still alive. When he heard news of the completion of the commentary, he gifted me five hundred rupees with the words: "This gift is on behalf of our respected father." I remember the delight of receiving that gift till this day. At the completion of *Fathul Bari*, Hafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah's mercy be upon him) had organized a banquet in which contemporary scholars were invited. On this happy occasion, I also desired to hold a banquet for my respected teachers and other scholars. On the other hand, Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafi Usmani and other teachers of Darul Uloom wished to convene a gathering in Darul Uloom at the completion of this *Takmilah*. Consequently, a banquet was organized on a small scale and an introductory gathering was also convened, chaired by my extremely beloved teacher Hazrat Maulana Sehban Mahmood

(may Allah's mercy be upon him). And I also received prayers from well-wishers. فالحمد لله تعالى حمداً كثيراً. طيباً مباركاً فيه مباركاً عليه كما يحب ربنا ويرضى.

When it was time for the book to be published, *Takmilah Fathul Mulhim* was completed in six volumes with the grace and favour of Allah Most High. Initially, I had thought to name the book "*Fathul Mun'im*" but was unsure whether to give it this new title or to just call it "*Takmilah Fathul Mulhim*". When I consulted Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah (may Allah's mercy be upon him), he replied: "As a junior, instead of giving your work an independent status, it is more befitting to retain the name chosen by the original author Hazrat Shaikhul Islam (may Allah's mercy be upon him), and to be tagged to a senior by declaring your work to be a completion of *Fathul Mulhim*. Instead of being independent, the honour of a junior lies in being deemed a follower of a senior." And this is the same teaching which I had heard from my respected father innumerable times, who would narrate it from Hazrat Thanvi (may Allah's mercy be upon him). My heart was thus settled upon the name "*Takmilah Fathul Mulhim*" instead of giving it an independent name. At that point, I found it necessary to publish the original "*Fathul Mulhim*" as the initial volumes and the "*Takmilah*" as the volumes at its end.

While publishing "*Fathul Mulhim*", the thought occurred that I had cited the Hadith numbers in the *Takmilah* while they were not cited in the original "*Fathul Mulhim*". Also, this lowly one had taken care to do *takhreej* of each Hadith in *Takmilah* up to at least the *Ummahat al-Sittah* and *Majma' az-Zawaid*, which I would initially do by myself and later Maulana Abdullah Memon and Maulana Abu Tahir completed. On the other hand, *takhreej* was not done in the original *Fathul Mulhim*. To ensure consistency between the two parts, I assigned the task of numbering of Hadith and brief *takhreej* of Hadith of *Fathul Mulhim* to a bright graduate of Darul Uloom Maulana Noorul Bashar (who is now MashaAllah running a quality institute by the name of Ma'had Usman Bin Affan). He MashaAllah completed this work with great zeal and hard work. Additionally, my elder brother Grand Mufti Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafi has been teaching Sahih Muslim for years upon years. During this time, he had written annotations at various places of Sahih Muslim. He included those annotations to the original *Fathul Mulhim*. After completion of these works, "*Fathul Mulhim Ma'a' Takmilah*" was published in twelve volumes through

Maktabah Darul Uloom, of which six volumes were the original commentary penned by Hazrat Shaikhul Islam (may his secret be sanctified) and the remaining six were written by this incapable one.

Hazrat Shaikh Abdul Fattah Abu Ghuddah was very happy when he came to know of this, and he also wrote an elaborate *taqreez* to it for my encouragement. Besides him, the famous Egyptian scholar Shaikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi (may his shade be extended), the Mufti of Tunisia Shaikh Mukhtar as-Salami (may Allah's mercy be upon him), and Shaikh Wahbah az-Zuhayli (may Allah's mercy be upon him) also wrote lively *taqreezes* to it. In a letter, I had requested my beloved elder Hazrat Sayyid Abul Hasan Nadvi (may Allah's mercy be upon him) to write something regarding it. In his reply, at first he excused himself with the words: "The science of Hadith is not my field". However, after a few days he wrote in a letter: "Since I have written prefaces to *Awjaz ul-Masalik* and *Badhlul Majhood*, the thought to write one to the commentary of Sahih Muslim has arisen". Thereafter he wrote a *taqreez* which was much beyond what I deserved.

I wished for this entire book to be published in an Arab country. Several Arab scholars who were my good friends were aware that I was writing this commentary. Especially Shaikh Wahbah az-Zuhayli, whose brilliant book "*al-Fiqh al-Islamiyy wa Adillatuhu*" has attained global fame, would ask me regarding its progress from time to time. When I informed him that with Allah's grace and favour the work had been completed, he was quite delighted, and in a gathering of Islamic Fiqh Council which was taking place in Jeddah, he brought Shaikh Muhammad Ali Dawlah Dimishqi (may Allah's mercy be upon him) to me and informed: "He is the owner of the famous publishing house of Damascus "Darul Qalam" and loves knowledge of Deen. He wants to publish *Fathul Mulhim* through his institute". I was quite affected by Shaikh Muhammad Ali's love for knowledge and promised to InshaAllah bring the manuscript of *Fathul Mulhim* in our next meeting and pass it to him for publication. And this happened. However, the manuscript I passed to him was a mix of composed and hand-written pages. He remarked: "We would have to do much work to organize and refine it." He thus passed this manuscript to an editing scholar in Damascus (from what I remember, his name was Shaikh Ali). He spent quite some effort on this manuscript. While I had mentioned citations to my references within the text of the commentary, he moved them



to footnotes, and also inserted additional citations in some places. Due to this, it took several years for the Darul Qalam manuscript to be published. Nonetheless, when it was finally published, it enhanced the prestige of the book much beyond its original state. And due to it, the book's circle of readers extended beyond the sub-continent to Arab countries.

Alhamdulillah, especially teachers of Sahih Muslim in the sub-continent encouraged this lowly one by keeping it in their study, and favourable remarks were also received beyond the sub-continent. After some time, a Malaysian lady respected Zunaidah Bint Muhammad Marzuki informed me by email that she was writing a PhD thesis on the *fiqhi manhaj* (jurisprudential methodology) of *Takmilah Fathul Mulhim*. She remained in contact with me through correspondence, and during a trip to Malaysia, she passed the essay to me saying that the International Islamic University of Malaysia had awarded her a doctorate degree for it. The essay was titled:

الشيخ محمد تقي العثماني: منهجه وأفكاره في شرح أحاديث المعاملات المالية في كتابه "تكملة فتح الملهم بشرح صحيح الإمام مسلم"

The essay was written in Arabic language and consisted of four hundred pages. I was pleasantly surprised to note that she had studied the book with a keen eye for detail and had commentated on various aspects of it after reading each and every letter of it, which is in itself a very scholarly work. جزاها الله تعالى خيرا الجزاء

After that, recently a bright female student of Punjab University's Faculty of Islamic Studies respected Zille Huma has written her PhD thesis under the supervision of Dr Muhammad Saad Siddiqui on *Fathul Mulhim* and its *Takmilah*, which is titled: *تكملة فتح الملهم - منج کا تحلیلی جائزہ* (*Takmilah Fathul Mulhim: An analytical review*) and consists of 833 pages. This is also quite a valuable essay which is written in Urdu language, and the unique features of *Takmilah* have been discussed in it in great detail.

In short, by the grace and favour of Allah the book was quite well-received, and I continued to learn from various circles that it is regularly referred to by many scholars. However, the real prayer is for it to be well-received in *that* Court whose acceptance is the real acceptance.